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In reply please quote:

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MEDIA RELEASE

ABS Crime and Safety Survey - 2001 (NSW Commentary)

The latest crime victim survey figures for NSW released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) show that the prevalence of robbery and sexual assault remained stable but the prevalence of assault and motor vehicle theft increased between April 2000 and April 2001.

To obtain the figures the ABS conducted a representative sample survey of almost 10,000 NSW residents aged 15 years and over and asked them about their experiences of crime over the last 12 months.

The survey is jointly commissioned by the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research and the NSW Police.

Because it measures the prevalence of both reported and unreported crime the ABS survey provides a more accurate picture of the true prevalence of crime than crime statistics based solely on reports of crime to police.

The prevalence of household crime (motor vehicle theft, attempted break and enter, actual break and enter) rose by 21 per cent, from 9.4 per cent of NSW households in 2000 to 11.4 per cent of households in 2001.

Most of the increase came from changes in the prevalence of motor vehicle theft and attempted break and enter.

The prevalence of motor vehicle theft rose by 41 per cent, from 1.7 per cent of households to 2.4 per cent of households. The prevalence of attempted break and enter rose by 26 per cent, from 3.5 per cent of households to 4.4 per cent of households.

The increase in household crime was concentrated in the Sydney Statistical Division. Household crime outside this Division did not significantly increase between April 2000 and April 2001.

The prevalence of assault rose by 17 per cent, from 3.6 per cent to 4.2 per cent of NSW residents aged 15 and over.

Once again, this increase was concentrated in the Sydney Statistical Division. In this Division, the prevalence of assault rose 23 per cent, from 3.5 per cent of persons in 2000 to 4.3 per cent of persons in 2001. Outside the Division the prevalence of assault rose 11 per cent, from 3.7 per cent of persons to 4.1 per cent of persons.

More than half (51.4%) of the assaults were committed by someone known to the victim.

In almost 20 per cent of assault cases, the offender was a family member or a friend. In approximately 11 per cent of cases the assailant was an acquaintance, while in about nine per cent of cases the assailant was a neighbour.

The introduction of PAL (the Police Assistance Line) may have encouraged greater public willingness to report attempted break and enter. The proportion of households reporting attempted break and enter to police increased from 19.7 per cent to 32.2 per cent between 2000 and 2001.

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Public willingness to report break and enter and motor vehicle theft to police, however, remained unchanged at about 73 per cent, in the case of break and enter, and 95 per cent in the case of motor vehicle theft.

Commenting on the ABS figures, Dr Don Weatherburn said that they confirmed trends in police recorded crime released by the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research in July, covering the two-year period up to March this year.

‘It is important to remember, however, that the ABS figures describe the crime situation in NSW as it was over the 12 months to April this year’.

‘We will get a clearer picture of what has been happening to crime in NSW during 2001 within the next couple of months’, he said.

Further enquiries:

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